The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

VOL. XXIII. BOSTON, JANUARY 3, 1874. NO. 36.

For the Myrtle.

Little Freddie.

NEW YEAR'S days are all sad to me,
Though loveliest of all the year;
They speak of one — how loved was he—
Though long since gone, yet still so dear.

There came a day, like these so sweet—
In health our Freddie saw it dawn;
The morrow's dawn he could not greet,
For ere it came the child had gone.

'Twas not a ling'ning, struggling death,
His hours of pain were only few.
So softly drew the closing breath,
That when it ceased, we scarcely knew.

We thought it hard, that one so good,
Should be so early called away;
But ah, we little understood
The dangers that around him lay.

We feared that time might heal the wound,
And we forget our darling boy,
But fleeting years that pass around,
Cannot his cherished form destroy.

In one lone niche, in sad array,
All waiting lie the well known clothes,
The little shoes he wore each day,
And playthings, all in sad repose.

They wait in vain, he comes no more,
To claim the cherished keepsakes here,
Yet not in vain—they half restore
The lovely form we hold so dear.

We see him yet, as on the day
He smiled upon his mother's knee;
We hear him yet, as when in play,
His merry laugh rang out in glee.

For years to come, e'er be it so!
We'll think of him. Be this our joy—
While others up to manhood grow.
He still will be "our little boy!"

Nellie M. Blunt.

For the Myrtle.

The Good King's Reign.

AN ALLEGORY FOR THE NEW YEAR.

PART II.

SHE spoke, and her winning voice trembled slightly at first, as she modestly raised her innocent eyes to the monarch. "My name is *May*, at my request the trees open wide their casements, and Flora's children look forth in all their beauty. Within their fragrant hands they hold the tiny fruit, that is to be. I carpet the earth with loveliest flowers. At my call the queen bee leads her silver-winged armies to my domain; and they hasten to fill the amber chambers of her palace, with golden nectar. I cover the once naked boughs of the tree and bush with a soft robe of delicate green, and in the shrub and tree, and beneath the sheltering eaves, my birdies build their pretty nests, where, as the little mother sits brooding the tiny eggs that hold her downy nestlings, the father pipes his merriest songs. My fishes sport in lake, brook and river, or bask in the sunlit water; and groups of happy children play in my green meadows. The air is full of rejoicing, and hopeful anticipation fills each heart."

The young girl paused, and strewed the throne with flowers; while the king smiled benignantly upon his beautiful attendant, then with a graceful obeisance, and a dimpling smile, upon her rosy lip, lovely *May* tripped gaily from the apartment.

"Here comes the radiant *Junia*!" whispered the minister, and a queenly maiden of matchless beauty, entered. A bright color tinged her olive cheek, and upon her full coral lips an arch smile rested. Her soft black eyes were large and brilliant, and her glossy raven tresses touched the hem of her robe. Her graceful dress of azure satin, was confined by a girdle of roses. On her regal head she wore a crown of lilies, and upon her beautiful neck and arms were necklace and bracelets of pearly tinted shells. She was attended by *Flora*, scattering odorous flowers, and by her side lingered *the sweet South Wind*.

As the king smilingly raised his sceptre, *Junia* bent her queenly head and spoke.

I dress the earth in her brightest attire. She wears for me her gala dress. It is the festival of our mother *Nature*. The world is a garden of roses. The gentle zephyrs bear to men the spicy odors of a thousand flowers. The air teems with the hum of insect life. The chirp of the cricket, the whirr of the locust, and the varied croak of the frog, tell of the busy life beneath the leaves.

"The golden grain nods invitingly to the reapers, and waves its million swords to keep back grim *Famine*.

"I bring the delicious strawberry, the transparent currant, and the luscious cherry. I wave my hand, and door and window opens to admit my fragrant breezes. The outer world is full of life, and with joyful hearts Earth's children welcome my loved presence."

As she finished the monarch arose. "Best and fairest of Nature's children," said he, "receive the reward of your virtues," and touching her wreath of lilies with the sceptre, it became a diadem of sparkling jewels.

The king now turned to his prime minister. "I am weary," he said, with a sigh, "and would fain rest, from the heat and turmoil of the day."

After a season of rest and refreshment, the king again ascended his throne, and the door of the audience chamber swung open wide, to admit a stalwart husbandman, and his beautiful and stately wife, who entered accompanied by a throng of rosy, laughing children.

"Behold *Julia* and *Augustus*, with their offspring, the summer weeks," said the minister, as they bowed before the king.

Behind *Augustus*, and subject to his bidding, crouched a thundercloud, of inky blackness, holding in one hand vivid darts of fiery lightning, in the other grateful showers, while the graceful page of *Julia*, bore a diamond chalice containing soft, and cooling dew, with which to refresh the thirsty earth.

"We have brought to your majesty," said *Augustus*, "the fruits of our labors!"

"Advance, children," said *Julia*, with matronly pride, "and tender our offerings to our beloved sovereign!"

The eager children gladly obeyed the summons, and bounded forward to lay their burdens at the feet of the king.

One brought a crystal dish of various berries, another bore a rustic basket of fresh vegetables of every kind that grows. One bore a nest of young birds just ready to fly; another a large shell which held a tempting supply of the variegated trout, the golden perch, and other delicacies of the watery element. One little fellow staggered beneath the weight of harvested grain, while his little sister brought an offering of fragrant flowers. One led in by a garland of daisies, a little colt; another, a baby calf, while others brought flocks of young chickens, turkeys, ducks, and goslings.

"Well done!" cried the king, as the children finished depositing their gifts at the foot of the throne. "Yours has been a dutiful and busy life. Accept the thanks of a grateful king!"

As *Augustus*, with his lovely family, passed from the apartment, a stripling entered, with firm step and graceful mien. A wreath of vine-leaves, and brilliant flowers, rested upon his noble brow, and his arms were laden with the downy peach, the luscious pear, the delicate plum, and purple grape. The young man knelt at the foot of the throne, flushed with heat and weariness, and the king felt a languor steal over him, as the apartment became heavy with the sultry and oppressive atmosphere of September.

"I am the tardy child of Summer!" said the lad, with a sigh, as he laid his burden down and lifted his tearful eyes to the king.

"Not more tardy than welcome!" said the monarch graciously. "Thanks for your generous gifts, and now you may retire."

The lad sprang to his feet with a smile, and the *young West Wind* accompanied him to the door and stood there to usher in *October*, a handsome young huntsman, who came rushing in, bringing with him, into the king's chamber a sparkling glow of life, which seemed to the monarch like elixir, as he breathed the exhilarating air that surrounded the youth.

Upon his head and around his broad shoulders, the young man wore wreaths of fairest leaves, of the richest and most gorgeous hues. In one hand he carried a foaming beaker of sparkling cider, wreathed with the bright flowers of the crysanthemum, and in the other, a salver loaded with golden corn. Across his stalwart shoulders hung game of every description, and from the overflowing pockets of his russet mantle, he shook the ripe chesnut, walnut and chinquapin. From these same pockets, peeped the bright eyed squirrel, and from the chaplet of leaves upon his head, the Katy-did kept up a ceaseless argument.

The king arose. "No need to tell of your prowess, young man," he exclaimed. "Your works speak volumes for you!"

October now deposited his offerings at the side of the throne, and left the room, amid the mournful soughling of the Wind.

The king turned to his minister. "I believe I am growing old," he said, with a shudder, as the relentless scythe waved over his head.

For answer, the minister turne dhis hour-glass.

A man now entered in the dress of a steward. The king raised his sceptre.

"I bring," said the stranger, "food and fuel for the coming winter. I raise the wood-pile and fill the coal-bin. I wave my hand, and lo! the store-room is filled with plenty; the granary and barn with abundance. I bring sweet comfort to house and stable, and prepare all things for the coming gales of *December*."

As he finished, *November* unfolded his mantle of withered vines, and from it fell mellow apples of crimson, gold, and green.

The old king nodded his head, in silent approval, and the stranger left the audience chamber.

"This is the last of your majesty's attendants," said the minister, as another form entered the door.

"I am glad," sighed the monarch, shivering. "I am ill, and weary." The king leaned heavily upon his sceptre, and feebly waved his hand for the stranger to approach.

The new-comer was an old man, robed in a gray costume. He was attended by sighing gales, whose mournful voices seemed to chant a requiem. From his mantle dropped dead leaves and dry herbs, but he wore a wreath of holly upon his silver locks, and in his hand he carried a fir-tree.

In his wake followed a fat old gentleman, with a jolly, smiling face, who carried a large pack upon his back, and whose pockets seemed stuffed out in all shapes.

"It is *December*!" cried the minister close to the king's ear.

"Why come you here?" said the king petulantly. What service can one so old and grim as you render to my pleasure-loving people?"

The old man bowed his hoary head. "I am the children's friend!" he replied, in a voice thin but shrill. "I bring the holy festival, the birthday of the *Christ Child*. I bring the Christmas-tree, the wreath of evergreen, the branch of mistletoe, and the holly, with its glossy, shining leaf, and coral berries.

"My attendant," said he, as he beckoned the jolly old gentleman to approach, "is *Kriss Kingle* the patron saint of the little people. He fills the stockings with goodies; burdens the Christmas tree, and box, with toys of every description, with candies, cakes, and fruit, with books of fairy tales and giant stories for the little ones who live in elf-land while they read. With poetry, music and romance for young men and maidens, and classic literature for the parents, with glittering gold and sparkling jewels, with kind remembrances from relative, friend, and lover. We bring to each their heart's desire, and my stay is attended with bright anticipation, gratitude and affection."

A gratified smile now lit up the pale face of the old king, as he whispered, "*my little people's friend*!"

As *December* gratefully withdrew, there crept from beneath his mantle, a little fellow with cramped and distorted body and grinning face. He touched the water in the king's goblet, and the crystal cracked and fell in pieces. He passed his hand over the windows, and a wondrous imagery of star and leaf appeared thereon.

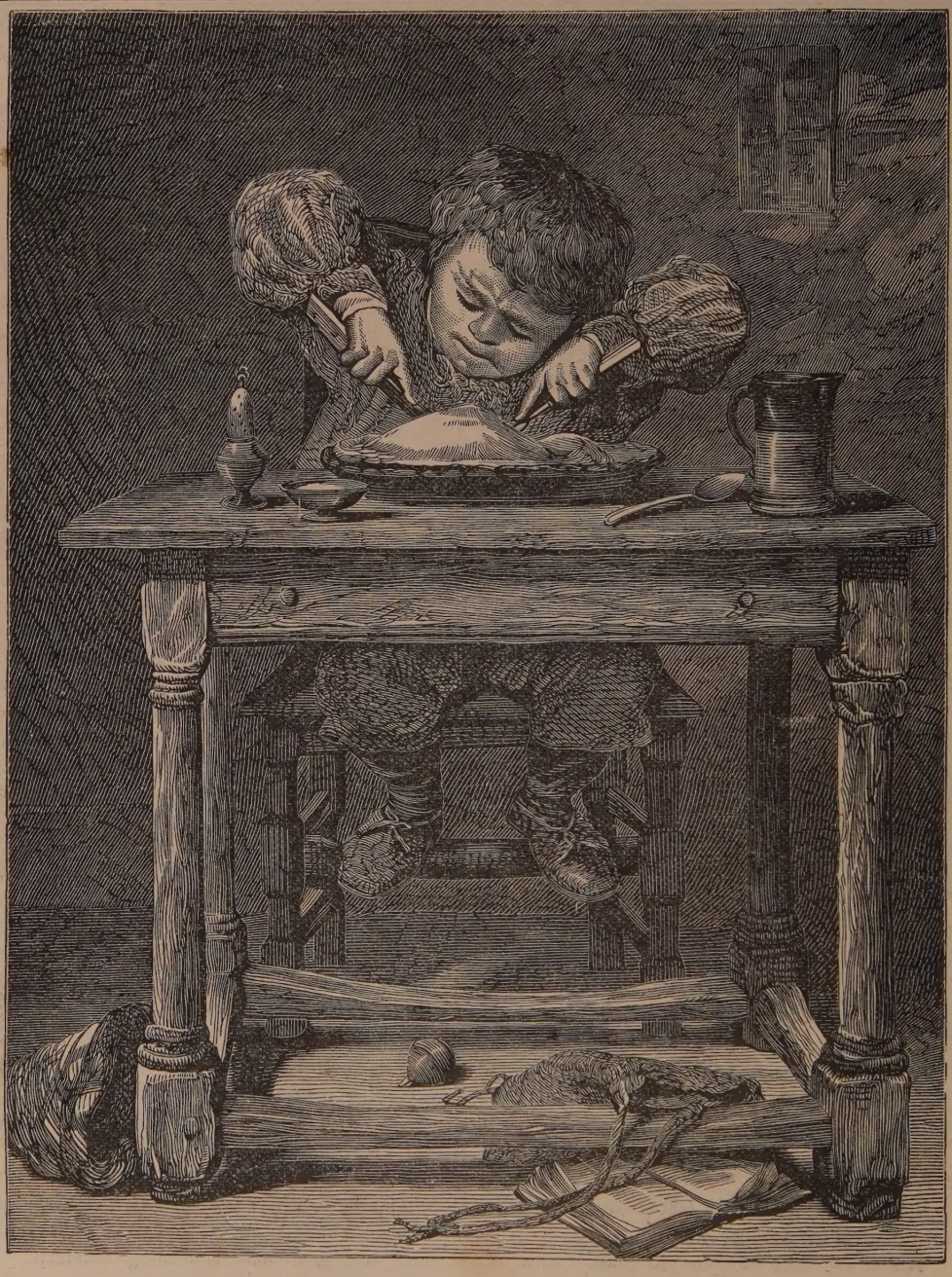
"Jack!" called a sharp voice from without, and the imp was gone.

The old king tottered to his feet. "Bear me to my chamber," he feebly said, "and let it pass for an ordinance forever, that these good servants shall wait upon each succeeding monarch."

The prime minister, whose name was *Tempus*, removed the heavy crown from the monarch's brow, the jewelled sceptre from his withered hand, and bare him from the audience chamber to his couch, to return no more.

The reign of the good king, Annus, was over.

Antonette H. Whitney.



For the Myrtle.

A Christmas Pie.

JACK HORNER had a Christmas pie.
His mother baked it round and high.

'Twas full of plums and fruit and meat,
As rich a pie as e'er was eat

As fine a pie as e'er was seen,—
The pie was fat, and Jack was lean.

Jack Horner, like a little dunce
Sat down to eat it all at once,

He stormed the pie with fork and knife,
And ate, as one who ate for life.

The mighty pie grew thin and flat;
The pie was lean, and Jack was fat.

His fork fell down, his head fell back,
The pie was gone, and so was Jack.

The pie in baking, burst its cover;
Jack nearly did the same thing over. *H. A. B.*

Winged Seeds.

Jennie and Charley were lying upon the grass in the front yard one warm afternoon, lazily blowing the feathery seeds of the dandelion into the air.

"How they fly!" said Charley. "Like a flock of little birds."

"Away they go," said Jennie, "over the fence into the next field. Isn't it wonderful that they have these little wings to fly about with?"

"Why do you suppose they are made so?" said Charley.

"I have heard mother say," answered Jennie, "that many seeds are made with wings that they may fly about and plant themselves in different places."

"I never thought of that before," said Charley; "but now that I do think of it, many plants are made in that way, the thistle for instance."

"Yes," said Jennie, "and the milkweed. I have one of its great pods at home, full of seeds, to each one of which is fastened a long silky tuft. I blow them about the room sometimes to see how prettily they float."

"Now I remember," said Charley, "how the maple seeds used to sail around the yard. They have real wings. I wonder if that is the way maple groves are planted."

"Perhaps so," answered Jennie. "Mother has told me many curious things about flowers. Do you remember how the balsam seeds fly when you touch the dry pod? That makes the seeds fly off to a distance instead of falling right down where they have grown."

"I've thought of another way that seeds have of being carried about," said Charley. "They fasten themselves to our clothes."

"You mean burrs," said Jennie.

"Yes," said Charley. "We carry them from place to place, and animals carry them in their hair and wool. Once I saw our sheep half covered with burdock burrs. I remember when I tried to pull some of them off, what sharp little hooks were on the ends of the seeds."

"Now," said Jennie, "let's give three hard puffs at this nice, full dandelion-top, and see if your mother wants us."

One, two, three!—and the white winged seeds went sailing away, and at last dropped here and there, to lie quietly until the next year, when they would spring up again to grow, bud, blossom, and go to seed.

Christmas Hymn.

IT was the calm and silent night.
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars,
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove and Mars
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

'Twas in the calm and silent night.
The senator of haughty Rome
Impatient urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly level rolling home:
Triumphal arches gleaming swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What recked the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He passed, for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars his only thought,
The air, how calm, and cold and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

Oh, strange indifference! Low and high
Drowsed over common joys and cares;
The earth was still, but knew not why,
The world was listening, unawares.
How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world forever
To that still moment none would heed
Man's doom was linked no more to sever,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night.
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness, charmed and holy now.
The night that erst no shame had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay, new-born,
The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

A GENTLEMAN, well known for his large benefactions, was asked what part of his income he was in the habit of contributing to the Lord's treasury. "I do not know," said he;" "I do very much as the woman did who was famous for the excellence of her rhubarb-pies. She put in as much sugar as her conscience would allow; and then shut her eyes, and put in a handful more. I give all my conscience approves, and then add a handful without counting it."—*Well Spring.*

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

— The Universalist Sabbath School Union ot Boston issues the following interesting notice:

"The 'Union,' through its Mission Committee, has engagad Wesleyan Hall, 36 Bromfield Street, Boston, for its uses on the Sunday afternoons, and on the second and fourth Monday evenings of January, February and March, 1874.

Religious Services, consisting of a Sunday School at 1 1-2 P. M., and preaching at 3 P. M., will be conducted at the above named Hall under the auspices of the Union, on Sunday, January 4, 1874, and on succeeding Sundays until further notice.

In making this announcement, the members of the Union beg to extend a cordial invitation to families or individuals, to whom our faith is dear, and who are not now conducted with any of our established Parishes or Sunday Schools, to join this movement which is initiated with hope. No pains will be spared in the effort to make this Sunday School and Service attractive and helpful to all who may seek a Sunday home in this part of the city.

There also be a Series of Lectures, addressed specially to the Teachers of the Union, on the Monday evenings above named.

The Board of Government would commend this series of Lectures, concerning which more special notice will be given to the Teachers and friends of the Union, and would urge their attendance upon the same.

Per order of the Union,

HENRY I. CUSHMAN, Secretary."

— The Sunday School of the Second Society (Rev. Dr. Miner's) of this city, holds a Christmas festival on Christmas evening. There will be no tree, but refreshments and amusements provides for all the children.

— We met a lady the other day purchasing gifts for the festival of the Sunday School at Gloucester. The Sunday School is too large for Christmas trees, but little gifts and bon-bons were to be distributed to all the scholars.

MAINE.

— The Sunday School in Augusta has a Christmas tree on Christmas eve. Home presents are to be carried to the Hall, to add to the quantity and quality of the fruit borne by the wonderful tree on that occasion.

NEW YORK.

— The Mission School in New York city has an Industrial School connected with it. It was first opened on the first Saturday in October, 1872, and was kept open each Saturday morning until March. The attendance of children averaged 124 at each session. The clothing made was given to the children attending, in prizes for industry and good behaviour. Three hundred and thirty-eight "prizes" of clothing were thus given out. The report in the *Leader* closes with these words: "The above report shows that a noble work has been quietly done by a few earnest friends of humanity. The School was reopened about the first of November last, and has a larger average attendance of scholars than last year. To make it more useful and efficient than before it needs material to work with, and especially more teachers. Ladies who sympathize with this movement can express that sympathy by spending an hour and a half each Saturday morning in an employment that will be sure to reward them with the greatest of pleasures — the pleasure of doing good."

— Mrs. S. M. C. Perkins writes to the *Guiding Star* the following account of a concert at Morris:

"I want to tell you a little about our Concert that we held last evening at our church. We have a nice Sunday School; it has increased very much of late; and a few weeks ago we told the children to find some good pieces, learn them well, come to the parsonage and rehearse, and our choirister would give them a drill in music, and we would give a Concert. They had had none for several years. Their eyes brightened a little, and one boy exclaimed, 'Talk about a concert and I am in for it!'

Well, we found many others were in for it, and the Sunday evening came, a bright, moonlight evening, and when the bells rang out and we went to Church we found the house packed full of people, and benches were being carried into the aisles. A good beginning, truly, I thought. The exercises commenced with singing by the scholars. Then came reading of the service in the usual service book.

The recitations were very finely rendered; indeed I never heard better in any ordinary Concert. We had: Christ and the Little Ones, The Weaver, The Blind Boy, Whittier's Eternal Goodness, and several others. I heard the remark made that the recitation of Eternal Goodness was better than a sermon. The music by the pupils, their sweet childish voices singing through the church, was better than a dozen sermons.

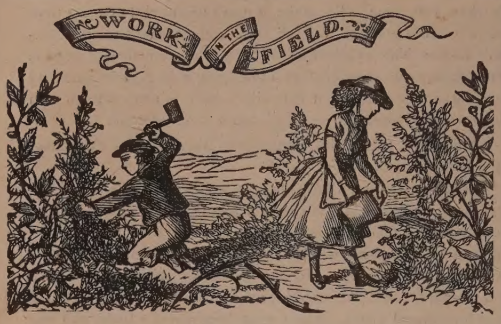
We made the exercises short, as children's concerts should be, and we all went to our homes feeling that we had passed a pleasant and hospitable evening. The Master was there, and left a blessing of peace upon each heart."

ILLINOIS.

— The Sunday School room connected with the new St. Paul's church on Michigan Avenue, near Eighteenth street, Chicago, is completed, and will be used as a place of worship by Rev. Dr. Ryder and his Society until the grand structure now being erected at the expense of over $100,000 is finished. It is a spacious and very convenient room, located in the basement, at the east end of the building. The dimensions are 88x52 feet, with octagonal ends. On the west side of the room, entered by large double doors, are the Bible class and infant class room, each 25x26 feet. On the east side are the extensive ladies' parlor and the library. The magnificent doors opening into these rooms are panelled with plate glass bearing the imprint, "Ladies' Parlor," "Bible Class," "Infant Class," and "Sunday School Room." The walls of all are finished in plain white, the intention being to fresco them after awhile. The wainscoting is in panels in buff color. The windows are of the Gothic style, in stained glass. The seating is with chairs, and the heating by means of a furnace. Altogether, it is quite perfect in its arrangements, and furnishes a splendid prelude to what is coming when the great edifice is completed.

— The dearest word in our language is Love. The greatest is God. The word expressing the shortest time is Now. The three make the first and great duty of man.

— The Bible says, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, there is no God." Must not that man be a fool indeed, who can say this beautiful and wonderful world came by chance, when he knows that there is not a house, or ship, or picture, or any other thing in it, but has had a maker? We might better say that this paper we are reading grew just as it is, than to say that the sun, moon and stars, and this globe on which we live, came without a creative hand.



Lives of the Apostles.

LESSON XLII.—PAUL.

Question. — How long did Paul continue his work in Corinth?

Answer. — Acts xviii. 2.

Q. — What Roman governor was in Corinth, at the time?

A. — Acts xviii. 12.

Q. — What did the Jews unite to do?

A. — Acts xviii. 12.

Q. — When the Jews had brought Paul before Gallio, what did the governor say to them?

A. — Acts xviii. 14.

NOTE. The governor being a heathen, was not acquainted with the religion of the Jews: and he seems to have had no patience with questions which they discussed with great interest.

Q. — What charge had the Jews made against Paul?

A. — Acts xviii. 13.

Q. — If it were a question of the Jews' religion between Paul and his persecutors, what did Gallio say he would not do?

A. — Acts xviii. 15.

Q. — What did Gallio do to the complaining Jews?

A. — Acts xviii. 16.

Q. — What did the Gentiles in the judgment hall, do to Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue?

A. — Acts xviii. 17.

Q. — Did Gallio interfere to prevent the violence?

A. — Acts xviii. 17.

NOTE. It is probable that Sosthenese was the leader in the persecution against Paul, and had shown a disregard of truth and justice in the charge against the Apostle.

Q. — Did Paul remain in Corinth long, after this event?

A. — Acts xviii. 18.

Q. — When he left Corinth, who went with him?

A. — Acts xviii. 18.

Hidden Seed

Enigma. No. 1.

I am composed of 36 letters.

My 31, 19, 34, 4, 29, 13, 8, 31, signifies "the field of blood."

My 21, 1, 24, 34, 32, 14, is what Peter commanded the Jews to do.

My 10, 3, 12, 13, 17, 27, 22, was one of the seven deacons.

My 11, 18, 5, 31, 35, 15, 28, 25, betrayed his master.

My 36, 6, 29, 16, 7, was destroyed by fire.

My 20, 33, 1, 2, 15, 36, was a god of the Egyptians.

My 9, 35, 11, 30, was part of a soldier's armor.

My 26, 22, 20, 9, 33, 29, is what we walk on.

My whole is a verse in the New Testament. B.

Enigma No. 2.

I am composed of twenty-six letters.

My 13, 11, 18, 20, 15, 23, 2, 20, 19, 21, 26, is a people to whom Paul wrote.

My 12, 14, 6, 22, is an emblem of innocence.

My 17, 18, 25, 1, 24, 4, 8, 6, 3, is an attribute of God — Pride and selfishness are false.

My 10, 5, 12, 16, 7, is a vowel.

My whole is an excellent text. L. M. T.

Bible Question.

When a Jew built a new house, what was he to do? Why?

What was a Jewish father and mother to do to a rebellious son?

What is said of the price of a virtuous woman?

Who said, "Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch"? What else did he say?

What maketh the deep to boil like a pot? Over what is he king?

Whose captivity dfd the Lord turn? When did he do it?

THE MYRTLE

IS PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY THE

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

37 Cornhill, Boston.

CHARLES CAVERLY, Jr., Agent.

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